REPORT RESUMES

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HUCKLEBERRY FINN. DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE. SHORT STORIES.
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A STUDENT'S CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR THE STUDY OF "HUCKLEBERRY FINN," "DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE," AND THREE SHORT STORIES WAS PRESENTED. THE SHORT STORIES INCLUDED WERE (1) "THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND" BY H.G. WELLS (COMPLETE TEXT), (2) "A DOUBLE-DYED DECEIVER" BY O. HENRY, AND (3) "A MYSTERY OF HEROISM" BY STEPHEN CRANE (COMPLETE TEXT). STUDY QUESTIONS, SUGGESTED EXERCISES, AND WRITING ASSIGNMENTS WERE PROVIDED. THE TEACHER VERSION IS ED 010 822. RELATED REPORTS ARE ED 010 129 THROUGH ED 010 160 AND ED 010 803 THROUGH ED 010 832 (GD)

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

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HUCKLEBERRY FINN

DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

SHORT STORIES

Literature Curriculum IV
Student Version

For Experimental Use
Not For Publication
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN

Literature Curriculum IV

Student Version

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THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN

Prologue Chapters I-III

1. From the first three chapters of The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, it is apparent that this novel is much more than an account of a boy's carefree trip down the Mississippi. A major thematic line becomes immediately identifiable. In the opening chapter, for example, an element of tension is set up within Huck. This element--truth--is responsible for the tension and appears immediately in the first paragraph. What is Huck's basic attitude toward truth? What does Huck think of the widow? Of Miss Watson? What elements of society might they represent? Once Huck is by himself, is he any happier? Why not? What does he do at the close of Chapter I? What is the advantage of having Huck superstititious? Consider this point as well as his age and manner of speaking. What does Huck's commentary about the sights and sounds of the night reveal about one aspect of his outlook on life?

2. In Chapter II Huck joins the gang. Is he any better off for leaving the organized, restricted world of Miss Watson? Is the basis for the organization of the game played by the gang similar to the basis for proper living in the world of Miss Watson and Aunt Polly? How are Tom Sawyer's society and Miss Watson's society similar? Just as Huck put Miss Watson's doctrines of the efficacy of prayer to the test, he attempts to understand Tom Sawyer's world of Aladdin's lamp and the "genies." He is disappointed:

> So then I judged that all the stuff was only just one of Tom Sawyer's lies. I reckoned he believed in the A-rabs and the elephants, but as for me, I think different. It had all the marks of the Sunday School.

Huck rebels against this way of life. What two values does he believe in that created his dissatisfaction with his aunt's world as well as Tom's? What penalty must he pay for rebellion?

PAP (Chapters IV-VII)

3. The arrival of Pap introduces a second phase in the young hero's struggle with his problem. Huck's money puts him in the community. He attempts to get rid of the money by "selling" it to the judge. This fails; Pap, of course, will stick around as long as there is a possibility of getting Huck's money. The law suit drags on. Huck will either be placed under the guardianship of the Widow or live with his father. Are these alternatives any solution to Huck's problem? What social institution at work here is against Huck's liberation? Now, recall what other codes of civilization infringed upon Huck. At first Huck enjoys living with his father on the Illinois shore; it appears to be the better choice:

> It was kind of lazy and jolly, laying off comfortable all day, smoking and fishing, and no books nor study . . . I had stopped cussing, because the Widow didn't like it; but now I took to it again because Pap hadn't no objections. It was pretty good times up in the woods there, take it all around.

However, his life is hardly ideal. What is Huck's attitude toward Pap's treatment of him? Is it one of fear, love, or genuine respect? Consider Pap's own relationship to organized society. What particular aspects of society does he loudly lambast--ineffectual though he is? Locate passages of his specific criticisms. Why, for example, is he really against education? The "Govment"? If Miss Watson represents a thoroughly organized society, what does Pap represent? Yet is his attitude toward the "nigger" much different from Miss Watson's? Neither way of life is for Huck.

JIM (Chapters VIII-XI)

4. To save himself Huck plans carefully and escapes to his island of refuge. What does Huck's escape indicate about his knowledge of the ways of violence as well as his basic intelligence? Once his death is confirmed, he has time on his hands to think. What problem, brought out earlier in the prologue, does the fugitive Huck re-experience now that he is "boss" of his island? How is this resolved? What common condition does Jim, the runaway slave now share with Huck?

5. For approximately eight chapters Twain has presented a continuous narrative emphasizing the themes of rebellion and loneliness, bringing this phase of the story to a resolution by joining Huck and Jim on an island. What does the river offer or represent to Huck and Jim? Chapter IX appears to be almost a lyrical climax as Twain presents the spectacular storm viewed by the fugitives from their cave refuge.

Reread Twain's magnificent description of the storm. Notice the length of the last sentence. What advantage can you see in writing it this way? Can you see a difference between the imagery Mark Twain presents as he describes the increasing tempo of the storm and the images presented at the end of the mounting cadences of this long sentence? This is typical of Mark Twain's style at its best, and one can see a similar contrast occuring within Chapter IX as a whole.

6. Can you see the basic images in this chapter? Do you see the latter image, the ugly "House of Death," as intruding upon the beautiful, natural scene described earlier? What might the contrast of these scenes be foreshadowing about the fate of Jim and Huck, safely isolated from men? Can they remain this way for very long? Huck shouldn't expect any problem, since he has been considered officially dead. His loneliness has been overcome since the arrival of Jim. But this very fact has created a new responsibility for Huck. What is it?

CONSCIENCE

7. Slavery was as much a part of Huck's world as were leaves on a tree, blue skies, and the rolling river. Negroes were not considered to be people; they were merely property. Remember Aunt Sally's reaction to Huck's tale of the steamboat accident? "Good gracious! Anybody hurt?" she asked. "No'm. Killed a nigger." "Well," she answered, "it's lucky; because sometimes people do get hurt." But Jim becomes something more than property to Huck. He removes the loneliness; he humbles Huck at the end of "Fooling Poor Old Jim." And Huck says that he "warn't ever sorry for it afterwards." Here love conquers pride, and the battle is not a long nor a very strenuous one. "It was fifteen minutes before I could work myself up to go and humble myself to a nigger." But Huck faces a more complex struggle when his love for Jim must do battle with his conscience, a conscience that had been molded by the laws of the land. What happens when Huck's heart and his conscience do battle in "The Rattlesnakeskin Does Its Work"? Which is the victor? How does Huck rationalize his actions? Trace his struggle when it occurs again in "You Can't Pray a Lie." Try to feel the intensity of this struggle. Does he rationalize so easily after this second victory of the heart? Why couldn't he pray? How does he arrive at his final commitment, "All right, then, I'll go to hell"? What plans does he make after these "awful thoughts and awful words"?

8. In one sense, Huck has very little confidence in himself. Comparing himself with Tom, for example, he views Tom as being good, while he himself is bad. Society's code is on the side of right; he himself is not. Once he decides to help Jim escape from the Phelps's farm, he accepts his decision as being immoral; but he can't accept Tom as being equally corrupt. Following this kind of reasoning, why do you think he is so relieved when he discovers that Tom, who directed Jim's escape, knew all along that Jim had been set free? Why do you think Huck had so little confidence in his own decisions? Do you think Mark Twain might have been using Huck to show that the laws of society or the customs of a particular culture are sometimes wrong? Explain. You will want to decide first whether or not Huck was right in what his heart told him to do about Jim. Huck thought he was wrong and chose to do the "wrong" in spite of the threat of damnation. Was Huck's real sin, perhaps, that he had too much faith in society and too little faith in himself? What his heart told him seemed the opposite of what his conscience told him. Did the real conflict arise because he responded more to the conscience of society than to his own conscience? Had his conscience been as deeply molded by society as it might at first appear? Consider how instinctively good Huck was on so many occasions. His first response to anyone in trouble was sympathetic. He felt compassion even for the Duke and the King when they were tarred and feathered. Consider too the contrast in Huck. He feels sympathy for almost everyone, and yet he trusts no one except Jim. Give examples to show that although Huck knew of the weakness and depravity of man, he never lost his basically sympathetic nature. Consider this side of Huck in another way. When he is on the raft with Jim, he can be himself. When he makes his excursions

into the country of men who live along the riverbank, he employs the strategy of deception because it has proven to be the only way a humble outcast like himself can survive.

THE RIVER

9. Beginning with Chapter XII, the river seems to become the main determinant of the narrative sequence. More than that, it becomes symbolically significant. Select passages which show how Huck feels about the river. What might the river symbolize?

10. The drift past Cairo in the fog marks a turning point in the lives of the fugitives and in the structure of the book as well. Defend or deny this statement, supporting your opinion by referring to specific events and to the way in which these events are presented.

The education of Huckleberry Finn was not being neglected. Each adventure on the shore teaches Huck some lesson about the pride and prejudice that characterized the South. What did his sojourn with the Grangerfords teach him? Remember Huck says he would never be able to forget what he saw.

12. The intrusion of the Duke and the King into the lives of Jim and Huck brings a whole series of difficulties which finally terminate in the two being tarred and feathered. Huck was quick to see that "these liars warn't no kings and dukes at all, but just low-down humbugs and frauds." Jim, too, sees that "dese kings o' ourn is regular rapscallions." What might Mark Twain's attitude have been toward royalty in general if we consider the escapades of these two confidence men?

13. What did Huck learn about human nature in the Colonel Sherburn incident?

PHELPS FARM: PROBLEMS

14. The concluding episode on the little cotton plantation where Jim is being held offers an interesting contrast between Tom and Huck. Contrast and compare the two.

15. Recent critics have expressed their dissatisfaction with Mark Twain's conclusion to his tale of Huckleberry Finn. Do you feel satisfied with the ending of the book? If not, what would you have done? Would you have allowed Jim to be killed by the bullet that was intended for him and thus force Tom to suffer, knowing that his withholding of the knowledge of Jim's freedom was the real murder weapon? Would you have allowed Huck to bring about Jim's escape without the questionable assistance of Tom, thus enabling the two fugitives to return to their raft and to their search for freedom? You may be perfectly satisfied with the ending as Twain presented it, but such speculation will help you to see that part of the work of the creative writer involves the intricate process of problem-solving.

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THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

by

Robert Louis Stevenson

Literature Curriculum IV

Student Version

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
By
Robert Louis Stevenson

Are you a mystery fan? If you are, then you will enjoy reading and discussing The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde which Robert Louis Stevenson wrote in 1886, three years after he wrote his famous adventure novel Treasure Island with which you are probably familiar.

None of us grows too old to enjoy a first-rate mystery, and this celebrated tale of dual personality is one of the most popular and enduring mysteries in all of literature.

Does the idea of dual personality intrigue you? Can you think of other stories in which it is the theme?

Stevenson's cousin Sir Thomas Graham Balfour wrote a biography of him in 1901 and made this interesting and significant observation:

> A subject much in his thoughts at this time was the duality of man's nature and the alternation of good and evil; and he was for a long while casting about for a story to embody this central idea. Out of this frame of mind had come the story still delayed, till suddenly one night he had a dream. He awoke and found himself in possession of two, or rather three, of the scenes in The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

Here we are given a glimpse of what we might call the "birth of a novel." If Sir Thomas is correct (there seem to be varying versions of Stevenson's inspiration for his story), the novel grew out of the author's thoughts concerning a psychological phenomenon which we call "dual personality." It was a provocative idea germinating in the author's mind, restless, eager to be born and clothed in language fitted to tell a tale both strange and remarkable. On page one of the Introduction to the Classic Series edition of the novel you may read in some detail Allen Bentley's version of the interesting genesis of the book.

We have already said that the subject of The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is dual personality, but let us keep in mind that Stevenson was writing an imaginary tale and not a scientific paper on a problem in psychology. Though he was deeply interested in his fellow-man and in morality, and though he had a life-long interest in the supernatural, he was preeminently a gifted story-teller of broad and humane interests.

In 1850 Stevenson was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, and he spent the greater part of his life, forty brief years, in a fruitless search for health. Though he was afflicted with tuberculosis, his life was not an unhappy one; he traveled extensively in Europe and in America, and later sailed to the South Seas where he eventually settled on the island of Upola in the Samoan Islands. He purchased three hundred acres of land and built a house which he called Vailima. The natives who came to know and love him called him Tusitala--"Teller of Tales."

Stevenson died on December 3, 1894, and was buried at the top of Mount Vaea on his own estate.

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde tells the story of a doctor's successful efforts to separate the good and the evil in man into distinct personalities, each with a life of its own. But it is chiefly with the consequences of this questionable achievement that the novel is concerned. Dr. Jekyll's accomplishment results in an unexpected harvest of evil--deceit, mindless brutality, murder, and suicide. We are spectators and permitted to watch the awesome unfolding of the tragedy.

It is the nature of a mystery to engage our curiosity and challenge our ingenuity in solving the mystery. Man is a naturally curious animal, and writers of mysteries, inventive and calculating creatures that they are, capitalize on the delight all of us take in being bewitched, bothered, and bewildered by a chilling and finely constructed mystery. We insist upon satisfaction of our curiosity once it has been aroused. There are few more pleasant experiences in literature than in being led down dark alleys, through a labyrinth of perplexing circumstances, showered with evidence calculated to lead us astray, and then jolted suddenly by a revelation that thoroughly shocks and surprises us. This is the fun to be found at the heart of every mystery, and you can intensify the pleasure of this experience by immersing yourself in the dark and menacing events of the novel, and attempting to unravel the complex and often baffling circumstances for yourself.

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is a different kind of mystery story from that which you may be used to. There are no ghosts, haunted houses, or private-eyes. There are no gloomy castles, subterranean passages or living-dead who walk by night. It is a straight-forward unfolding of sinister and unexplainable events surrounding a repellent central character, and an attempt to place him in some logical perspective with a well-to-do and respected London doctor.

The story is told through flash-back, through observations and comment by the lawyer, who is Stevenson's principal point-of-view character, through letters and documents, a will, and finally through a detailed confession. This multiple device not only adds variety to the telling of the tale, but reinforces its authenticity and credibility.

Apart from Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde there are three men who carry the story to its climax--a lawyer as has been already indicated, a doctor, and the doomed man's own servant. Each has a point of view differing according to his relationship to the victim. Each sees the protagonist in a different light. The protagonist, too, has a point of view concerning himself and his actions as you will discover in the closing chapter of the book.

Now you have been introduced to the story; you know that it is a tragedy as well as a mystery. There is clearly implicit in the tale a warning against deliberately courting evil--against mortal man playing God. But there is much more, too, and it is there awaiting your discovery. You will find this novel a moving and affecting reading experience.

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

Questions for Study and Discussion

1. The first person introduced in the novel is Dr. Jekyll's lawyer and friend, Gabriel John Utterson. What kind of man is he? Why do you think Stevenson establishes the character of the man so unmistakably and positively at the outset of the story?

2. Mr. Utterson says of himself, "I incline to Cain's heresy, I let my brother go to the devil in his own way." What is the allusion to Cain? What does the statement tell you about Utterson?

3. Richard Enfield is a distant relative of Mr. Utterson's and we are told very little about him. What is his importance in Chapter One?

4. Of what importance to the story is the by-street where Utterson and Enfield find themselves on one of their customary Sunday walks? (The streets and houses where the central events of the story take place are of more than usual importance in the tale; hence it would seem advisable to explain, for example, the term "by-street" and perhaps by means of a diagram or illustration, indicate the structural connection between Dr. Jekyll's house and the all-important laboratory adjunct).

5. The location and general setting of the story tend to increase the element of mystery in it. How is this accomplished?

6. The strange story of Enfield's encounter with Hyde suggests something sinister and ugly in this important character. What circumstances bring Enfield and Hyde together? What is the impression Hyde leaves with those who meet him? What are some of the salient aspects of the man?

7. What is the meaning of the term "Black Mail House"?

8. What is significant in Mr. Utterson's dream about Edward Hyde?

9. What makes Dr. Jekyll's Will, kept in trust in Utterson's safe, an uncommon legal document? Since a lawyer ordinarily draws up a Will at a client's request, it is significant that Utterson has refused to be a part of the Will-making in this case. What are his reasons?

10. Why do you think Dr. Jekyll is unwilling to discuss the matter of his Will with Mr. Utterson, and be drawn into a discussion about Hyde?

11. Dr. Hastie Lanyon is the second close friend of Dr. Jekyll's to be introduced. Contrast him with Gabriel Utterson; note Lanyon's ambiguous reference to Jekyll's "unscientific balderdash." Is there some foreshadowing here? What is the purpose of Utterson's visit to Lanyon?

12. What is Dr. Jekyll's opinion of Dr. Lanyon?

13. On the basis of what you now know of Dr. Jekyll, formulate an opinion about him.

14. Dr. Jekyll exacts a promise from a reluctant Utterson--what is the promise?

15. What is the basis for Mr. Utterson's fears concerning the relationship between Hyde and Jekyll? What is his chief fear?

16. At Jekyll's dinner party for his old friends Utterson remains with him after the other guests have gone; what is his purpose? Is he successful in it?

17. What are the most important factors in the murder of Sir Danvers Carew? Is the evidence against Hyde conclusive? Cite some examples. What is the murderer's motive? How is Mr. Utterson involved in it?

18. What resemblance, if any, is there between Hyde's behavior at the time of the murder and his behavior on the occasion of running down the child on the deserted street?

19. It is suggested that the apprehension of Hyde by the police will be difficult--why?

20. Following the murder and after the unavailing search for Hyde, Utterson goes to Jekyll as his friend and legal counsel. Jekyll speaks of a letter--presumably from Hyde that he hesitates showing to the police. Utterson says, "You fear, I suppose, that it might lead to his detection?" Jekyll answers, "No, I cannot say that I care what becomes of Hyde; I am quite done with him. I was thinking of my own character, which this hateful business has rather exposed." Utterson views this as selfishness on Jekyll's part but not because he has any sympathy for Hyde. What is the reason for the lawyer's surprise?

21. Dr. Jekyll's agitated behavior at his meeting with Mr. Utterson shortly after the murder of Sir Danvers is, to all appearances, a sincere and spontaneous one. What is the truth of Jekyll's performance, and especially of the alleged letter from Hyde?

22. What evidence do you find in the conversation between the two men to indicate that Utterson is innocent of any suspicion of the truth about the Jekyll-Hyde relationship?

23. Jekyll in his extremity and anxiety over what has happened says to Utterson, "I have had a lesson--oh, God, Utterson, what a lesson I have had." What is especially noteworthy in his utterance?

24. Who is Mr. Guest and what is his importance in the story? In what way is the letter, allegedly from Hyde, dangerously incriminating to Jekyll? At this time Utterson comes perilously close to the truth about his client and friend; what do you think is the reason he seems not to recognize it or even sense it? What does he suspect?

25. "The death of Sir Danvers was, to his (Utterson's) way of thinking, more than paid for by the disappearance of Hyde." Does this seem to you a strange attitude for a lawyer to have? How would you explain it?

26. With the disappearance of Hyde, Stevenson lightens the mystery, but only briefly, by bringing together Dr. Jekyll, Dr. Lanyon, and Mr. Utterson in a reestablished camaraderie reminiscent of times past. Then suddenly and inexplicably Jekyll's door is closed to his friends; he withdraws from their society and an even greater mystery envelops him. What has happened? What is Utterson's reaction?

27. Recall Stevenson's earlier description of Dr. Lanyon and contrast it now with the doctor's appearance and attitude on the occasion of Utterson's visit. What are Lanyon's feelings for Jekyll? What becomes of Lanyon? In what way do these events expand the aura of mystery around Dr. Jekyll, leaving Utterson disturbed and confused?

28. Unable to control his grave fears and apprehension about his master, Poole calls upon Utterson to enlist his help in solving the mystery which has reduced Jekyll's household to chaos. What is Poole's main concern? What is his major suspicion? Cite evidence to support each belief.

29. What single factor finally convinces Utterson and Poole to force down the door to Jekyll's laboratory and ascertain who is there?

30. What circumstances precipitate the death of Hyde? Do either Utterson or Poole suspect the actual situation? Why?

31. There is a surprising change in Dr. Jekyll's Will when it is found in the laboratory after the death of Hyde. What is the change and why does it so surprise Utterson?

32. What is the fundamental cause which leads Jekyll to believe in the duality in man's nature? Cite evidence from the Confession.

33. As Jekyll conjectures on the possibility--and, indeed, the likelihood of man's duality, to what intriguing and unscientific and immoral objectives is he led? What are the advantages to himself as he sees them?

34. Why do you think Stevenson made the person of Hyde so completely unlike Jekyll? Might it not have enhanced the story if he had been younger, more handsome and personally attractive? Might it not also have made his evil nature the more shocking?

35. What is your opinion of the novel? Does it satisfy as a "mystery"? What do you think of the subject matter? Of the possibility that man does actually have a dual nature?

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

SHORT STORIES

The Country of the Blind
A Double-Dyed Deceiver
A Mystery of Heroism
Literature Curriculum IV
Student Version

NOTE

You will notice that this unit begins with page 52. The reason is that we wanted to use a long story, "The Apple Tree" by John Galsworthy, in this unit and already had it mimeographed. But the publisher decided not to give us permission to use the story, so it had to be withdrawn.

The Country of the Blind

H. G. Wells

You are about to read a story that is intriguing, unusual, and enjoyable. You will read about a strange land and about strange people. Yet this story, like so many you have studied, has two subjects. It is about Nunez, the South American explorer, and his incredible adventure; but it is about other things as well.

H. G. Wells, the author, is regarded as the originator of modern science fiction, and perhaps you will agree when you have finished this that he had a very lively imagination indeed. But this story is more than a weird story of the unknown. In it Wells makes some scathing comments about society. See if you agree—or disagree --with him.

The Country of the Blind

H. G. Wells

Three hundred miles and more from Chimborazo, one hundred from the snows of Cotopaxi, in the wildest wastes of Ecuador's Andes, there lies that mysterious mountain valley, cut off from the world of men, the Country of the Blind. Long years ago that valley lay so far open to the world that men might come at last through frightful gorges and over an icy pass into its equable meadows; and thither indeed men came, a family or so of Peruvian half-breeds fleeing from the lust and tyranny of an evil Spanish ruler. Then came the stupendous outbreak of Mindobamba, when it was night in Quito for seventeen days, and the water was boiling at Yaguachi and all the fish floating dying even as far as Guayaquil; everywhere along the Pacific slopes there were land-slips and swift thawings and sudden floods, and one whole side of the old Arauca crest slipped and came down in thunder, and cut off the Country of the Blind for ever from the exploring feet of men. But one of these early settlers had chanced to be on the hither side of the gorges when the world had so terribly shaken itself, and he perforce had to forget his wife and his child and all the friends and possessions he had left up there, and start life over again in the lower world. He started it again but ill, blindness overtook him, and he died of punishment in the mines; but the story he told begot a legend that lingers along the length of the Cordilleras of the Andes to this day.

He told of his reason for venturing back from that fastness, into which he had first been carried lashed to a llama, beside a vast bale of gear, when he was a child. The valley, he said, had in it all that the heart of man could desire--sweet water, pasture, and even climate, slopes of rich brown soil with tangles of a shrub that bore an excellent fruit, and on one side great hanging forests of pine that held the avalanches high. Far overhead, on three sides, vast cliffs of grey-green rock were capped by cliffs of ice; but the glacier stream came not to them but flowed away by the farther slopes, and only now and then huge ice masses fell on the valley side. In this valley it neither rained nor snowed, but the abundant springs gave a rich green pasture, that irrigation would spread over all the valley space. The settlers did well indeed there. Their beasts did well and multiplied, and but one thing marred their happiness. Yet it was enough to mar it greatly. A strange disease had come upon them, and had made all the children born to them there--and indeed, several older children also--blind. It was to seek some charm or antidote against this plague of blindness that he had with fatigue and danger and difficulty returned down the gorge. In those days, in such cases, men did not think of germs and infections but of sins, and it seemed to him that the reason of this affliction must lie in the negligence of these priestless immigrants to set up a shrine so soon as they entered the valley. He wanted a shrine--a handsome, cheap, effectual shrine--to be erected in the valley; he wanted relics and such-like potent things of faith, blessed objects and mysterious medals and prayers. In his wallet he had a bar of native silver for which he would not account; he insisted there was none in the valley with something of the insistence of an inexpert liar. They had all clubbed their money and ornaments together, having little need for such treasure up there, he said, to buy them holy help against their ill. I figure this dim-eyed young mountaineer, sunburnt, gaunt, and anxious, hatbrim clutched feverishly, a man all unused to the ways of the lower world, telling this story to some keen-eyed, attentive priest before the great convulsion; I can picture him presently seeking to return with pious and infallible remedies against that trouble, and the infinite dismay with which he must have faced the tumbled vastness where the gorge had once come out. But the rest of his story of mischances is lost to me, save that I know of his evil death after several years. Poor stray from that remoteness! The stream that had once made the gorge now bursts from the mouth of a rocky cave, and the legend his poor, ill-told story set going developed into the legend of a race of blind men somewhere "over there" one may still hear to-day.

And amidst the little population of that now isolated and forgotten valley the disease ran its course. The old became groping and purblind, the young saw but dimly, and the children that were born to them saw never at all. But life was very easy in that snow-rimmed basin, lost to all the world, with neither thorns nor briars, with no evil insects nor any beasts save the gentle breed of llamas they had lugged and thrust and followed up the beds of the shrunken rivers in the gorges up which they had come. The seeing had become purblind so gradually that they scarcely noted their loss. They guided the sightless youngsters hither and thither until they knew the whole valley marvellously, and when at last sight died out among them the race lived on. They had even time to adapt themselves to the blind control of fire, which they made carefully in stoves of stone. They were a simple strain of people at the first, unlettered, only slightly touched with the Spanish civilisation, but with something of a tradition of the arts of old Peru and of its lost philosophy. Generation followed generation. They forgot many things; they devised many things. Their tradition of the greater world they came from became mythical in colour and uncertain. In all things save sight they were strong and able, and presently the chance birth and heredity sent one who had an original mind and who could talk and persuade among them, and then afterwards another. These two passed, leaving their effects, and the little community grew in numbers and in understanding, and met and settled social and economic problems that arose. Generation followed generation. Generation followed generation. There came a time when a child was born who was fifteen generations from that ancestor who went out of the valley with a bar of silver to seek God's aid, and who never returned. Thereabouts it chanced that a man came into this community from the outer world. And this is the story of that man.

He was a mountaineer from the country near Quito, a man who had been down to the sea and had seen the world, a reader of books in an original way, an acute and enterprising man, and he was taken on by a party of Englishmen who had come out to Ecuador to climb mountains, to replace one of their three Swiss guides who had fallen ill. He climbed here and he climbed there, and then came the attempt on Parascotopetl, the Matterhorn of the Andes, in which he was lost to the outer world. The story of the accident has been written a dozen times. Pointer's narrative is the best. He tells how the little party worked their difficult and almost vertical way up to the very foot of the last and greatest precipice, and how they built a night shelter amidst the snow upon a little shelf of rock, and, with a touch of real dramatic power, how presently they found Nunez had gone from them. They shouted, and there was no reply; shouted and whistled, and for the rest of that night they slept no more.

As the morning broke they saw the traces of his fall. It seems impossible he could have uttered a sound. He had slipped eastward towards the unknown side of the mountain; far below he had struck a steep slope of snow, and ploughed his way down it in the midst of a snow avalanche. His track went straight to the edge of a frightful precipice, and beyond that everything was hidden. Far, far below, and hazy with distance, they could see trees rising out of a narrow, shut-in valley--the lost Country of the Blind. But they did not know it was the lost Country of the Blind, nor distinguish it in any way from any other narrow streak of upland valley. Unnerved by this disaster, they abandoned their attempt in the afternoon, and Pointer was called away to the war before he could make another attack. To this day Parascotopetl lifts an unconquered crest, and Pointer's shelter crumbles unvisited amidst the snows.

And the man who fell survived.

At the end of the slope he fell a thousand feet, and came down in the midst of a cloud of snow upon a snow slope even steeper than the one above. Down this he was whirled, stunned and insensible, but without a bone broken in his body; and then at last came to gentler slopes, and at last rolled out and lay still, buried amidst a softening heap of the white masses that had accompanied and saved him. He came to himself with a dim fancy that he was ill in bed; then realised his position with a mountaineer's intelligence, and worked himself loose and, after a rest or so, out until he saw the stars. He rested flat upon his chest for a space, wondering where he was and what had happened to him. He explored his limbs, and discovered that several of his buttons were gone and his coat turned over his head. His knife had gone from his pocket and his hat was lost, though he had tied it under his chin. He recalled that he had been looking for loose stones to raise his piece of the shelter wall. His ice-axe had disappeared.

He decided he must have fallen, and looked up to see, exaggerated by the ghastly light of the rising moon, the tremendous flight he had taken. For a while he lay, gazing blankly at that pale cliff towering above, rising moment by moment out of a subsiding tide of darkness. Its phantasmal, mysterious beauty held him for a space, and then he was seized with a paroxysm of sobbing laughter....

After a great interval of time he became aware that he was near the lower edge of the snow. Below, down what was now a moonlit and practicable slope, he saw the dark and broken appearance of rock-strewn turf. He struggled to his feet, aching in every joint and limb, got down painfully from the heaped loose snow about him, went downward until he was on the turf, and there dropped rather than lay beside a boulder, drank deep from the flask in his inner pocket, and instantly fell asleep....

He was awakened by the singing of birds in the trees far below.

He sat up and perceived he was on a little alp at the foot of a vast precipice, that was grooved by the gully down which he and his snow had come. Over against him another wall of rock reared itself against the sky. The gorge between these precipices ran east and west and was full of the morning sunlight, which lit to the westward the mass of fallen mountain that closed the descending gorge. Below him it seemed there was a precipice equally steep, but behind the snow in the gully he found a sort of chimney-cleft dripping with snow-water down which a desperate man might venture. He found it easier than it seemed, and came at last to another desolate alp, and then after a rock climb of no particular difficulty to a steep slope of trees. He took his bearings and turned his face up the gorge, for he saw it opened out above upon green meadows, among which he now glimpsed quite distinctly a cluster of stone huts of unfamiliar fashion. At times his progress was like clambering along the face of a wall, and after a time the rising sun ceased to strike along the gorge, the voices of the singing birds died away, and the air grew cold and dark about him. But the distant valley with its houses was all the brighter for that. He came presently to talus, and among the rocks he noted--for he was an observant man--an unfamiliar fern that seemed to clutch out of the crevices with intense green hands. He picked a frond or so and gnawed its stalk and found it helpful.

About midday he came at last out of the throat of the gorge into the plain and the sunlight. He was stiff and weary; he sat down in the shadow of a rock, filled up his flask with water from a spring and drank it down, and remained for a time resting before he went on to the houses.

They were very strange to his eyes, and indeed the whole aspect of that valley became, as he regarded it, queerer and more unfamiliar. The greater part of its surface was lush green meadow, starred with many beautiful flowers, irrigated with extraordinary care, and bearing evidence of systematic cropping piece by piece. High up and ringing the valley about was a wall, and what appeared to be a circumferential water-channel, from which little trickles of water that fed the meadow plants came, and on the higher slopes above this flocks of llamas cropped the scanty herbage. Sheds, apparently shelters or feeding-places for the llamas, stood against the boundary wall here and there. The irrigation streams ran together into a main channel down the centre of the valley, and this was enclosed on either side by a wall breast high. This gave a singularly urban quality to this secluded place, a quality that was greatly enhanced by the fact that a number of paths paved with black and white stones, and each with a curious little kerb at the side, ran hither and thither in an orderly manner. The houses of the central village were quite unlike the casual and higgledy-piggledy agglomeration of the mountain villages he knew; they stood in a continuous row on either side of a central street of astonishing cleanness; here and there their parti-coloured facade was pierced by a door, and not a solitary window broke their even frontage. They were parti-coloured with extraordinary irregularity, smeared with a sort of plaster that was sometimes grey, sometimes drab, sometimes slate-coloured or dark brown; and it was the sight of this wild plastering first brought the word "blind" into the thoughts of the explorer. "The good man who did that," he thought, "must have been as blind as a bat."

He descended a steep place, and so came to the wall and channel that ran about the valley, near where the latter spouted out its surplus contents into the deeps of the gorge in a thin and wavering thread of cascade. He could now see a number of men and women resting on piled heaps of grass, as if taking a siesta, in the remoter part of the meadow, and nearer the village a number of recumbent children, and then nearer at hand three men carrying pails on yokes along a little path that ran from the encircling wall towards the houses. These latter were clad in garments of llama cloth and boots and belts of leather, and they wore caps of cloth with back and ear flaps. They followed one another in single file, walking slowly and yawning as they walked, like men who have been up all night. There was something so reassuringly prosperous and respectable in their bearing that after a moment's hesitation Nunez stood forward as conspicuously as possible upon his rock, and gave vent to a mighty shout that echoed round the valley.

The three men stopped, and moved their heads as though they were looking about them. They turned their faces this way and that, and Nunez gesticulated with freedom. But they did not appear to see him for all his gestures, and after a time, directing themselves towards the mountains far away to the right, they shouted as if in answer. Nunez bawled again, and then once more, and as he gestured ineffectually the word "blind" came up to the top of his thoughts. "The fools must be blind," he said.

When at last, after much shouting and wrath, Nunez crossed the stream by a little bridge, came through a gate in the wall, and approached them, he was sure that they were blind. He was sure that this was the Country of the Blind of which the legends told. Conviction had sprung upon him, and a sense of great and rather enviable adventure. The three stood side by side, not looking at him, but with their ears directed towards him, judging him by his unfamiliar steps. They stood close together like men a little afraid, and he could see their eyelids closed and sunken, as though the very balls beneath had shrunk away. There was an expression near awe on their faces.

"A man," one said, in hardly recognisable Spanish--"a man it is--a man or spirit--coming down from the rocks."

But Nunez advanced with the confident steps of a youth who enters upon life. All the old stories of the lost valley and the Country of the Blind had come back to his mind, and through his thoughts ran this old proverb, as if it were a refrain---

"In the Country of the Blind the One-eyed Man is King."

"In the Country of the Blind the One-eyed Man is King."

And very civilly he gave them greeting. He talked to them and used his eyes.

"Where does he come from, brother Pedro?" asked one.

"Down out of the rocks."

"Over the mountains I come," said Nunez, "out of the country beyond there--where men can see. From near Bogota, where there are a hundred thousands of people, and where the city passes out of sight."

"Sight?" muttered Pedro. "Sight?"

"He comes," said the second blind man, "out of the rocks."

The cloth of their coats Nunez saw was curiously fashioned, each with a different sort of stitching.

They startled him by a simultaneous movement towards him, each with a hand outstretched. He stepped back from the advance of these spread fingers.

"Come hither," said the third blind man, following his motion and clutching him neatly.

And they held Nunez and felt him over, saying no word further until they had done so.

"Carefull," he cried, with a finger in his eye, and found they thought that organ, with its fluttering lids, a queer thing in him. They went over it again.

"A strange creature, Correa," said the one called Pedro. "Feel the coarseness of his hair. Like a llama's hair."

"Rough he is as the rocks that begot him," said Correa, investigating Nunez's unshaven chin with a soft and slightly moist hand. "Perhaps he will grow finer." Nunez struggled a little under their examination, but they gripped him firm.

"Carefully," he said again.

"He speaks," said the third man. "certainly he is a man."

"Ugh!" said Pedro, at the roughness of his coat.

"And you have come into the world?" asked Pedro.

"Out of the world. Over mountains and glaciers; right over above there, half-way to the sun. Out of the great big world that goes down, twelve days' journey to the sea."

They scarcely seemed to heed him. "Our fathers have told us men may be made by the forces of Nature," said Correa. "It is the warmth of things and moisture, and rottenness--rottenness."

"Let us lead him to the elders," said Pedro.

"Shout first," said Correa, "lest the children be afraid. This is a marvellous occasion."

So they shouted, and Pedro went first and took Nunez by the hand to lead him to the houses.

He drew his hand away. "I can see," he said.

"See?" said Correa.

"Yes, see," said Nunez, turning towards him, and stumbled against Pedro's pail.

"His senses are still imperfect," said the third blind man. "He stumbles, and talks unmeaning words. Lead him by the hand."

"As you will," said Nunez, and was led along, laughing.

It seemed they knew nothing of sight.

Well, all in good time he would teach them.

He heard people shouting, and saw a number of figures gathering together in the middle roadway of the village.

He found it tax his nerve and patience more than he had anticipated, that first encounter with the population of the Country of the Blind. The place seemed larger as he drew near to it, and the smeared plasterings queerer, and a crowd of children and men and women (the women and girls, he was pleased to note, had some of them quite sweet faces, for all their eyes were shut and sunken) came about him, holding on to him, touching him with soft, sensitive hands, smelling at him, and listening at every word he spoke. Some of the maidens and children, however, kept aloof as if afraid, and indeed his voice seemed coarse and rude beside their softer notes. They mobbed him. His three guides kept close to him with an effect of proprietorship, and said again and again, "A wild man out of the rocks."

"Bogota," he said. "Bogota. Over the mountain crests."

"A wild man--using wild words," said Pedro. "Did you hear that--Bogota? His mind is hardly formed yet. He has only the beginnings of speech."

A little boy nipped his hand. "Bogota!" he said mockingly.

"Ay! A city to your village. I come from the great world--where men have eyes and see."

"His name's Bogota," they said.

"He stumbled," said Correa, "stumbled twice as we came hither."

"Bring him to the elders."

And they thrust him suddenly through a doorway into a room as black as pitch, save at the end there faintly glowed a fire. The crowd closed in behind him and shut out all but the faintest glimmer of day, and before he could arrest himself he had fallen headlong over the feet of a seated man. His arm, outflung, struck the face of someone else as he went down; he felt the soft impact of features and heard a cry of anger, and for a moment he struggled against a number of hands that clutched him. It was a one-sided fight. An inkling of the situation came to him, and he lay quiet.

"I fell down," he said; "I couldn't see in this pitchy darkness."

There was a pause as if the unseen persons about him tried to understand his words. Then the voice of Correa said: "He is but newly formed. He stumbles as he walks and mingles words that mean nothing with his speech."

Others also said things about him that he heard or understood imperfectly.

"May I sit up?" he asked, in a pause. "I will not struggle against you again."

They consulted and let him rise.

The voice of an older man began to question him, and Nunez found himself trying to explain the great world out of which he had fallen, and the sky and mountains and sight and such-like marvels, to these elders who sat in darkness in the Country of the Blind. And they would believe and understand nothing whatever he told them, a thing quite outside his expectation. They would not even understand many of his words. For fourteen generations these people had been blind and cut off from all the seeing world; the names for all the things of sight had faded and changed; the story of the outer world was faded and changed to a child's story; and they had ceased to concern themselves with anything beyond the rocky slopes above their circling wall. Blind men of genius had arisen among them and questioned the shreds of belief and tradition they had brought with them from their seeing days, and had dismissed all these things as idle fancies, and replaced them with new and saner explanations. Much of their imagination had shrivelled with their eyes, and they had made for themselves new imaginations with their ever more sensitive ears and finger-tips. Slowly Nunez realised this; that his expectation of wonder and reverence at his origin and his gifts was not to be borne out; and after his poor attempt to explain sight to them had been set aside as the confused version of a new-made being describing the marvels of his incoherent sensations, he subsided, a little dashed, into listening to their instruction. And the eldest of the blind men explained to him life and philosophy and religion, how that the world (meaning their valley) had been first an empty hollow in the rocks, and then had come, first, inanimate things without the gift of touch, and llamas and a few other creatures that had little sense, and then men, and at last angels, whom one could hear singing and making fluttering sounds, but whom no one could touch at all, which puzzled Nunez greatly until he thought of the birds.

He went on to tell Nunez how this time had been divided into the warm and the cold, which are the blind equivalents of day and night, and how it was good to sleep in the warm and work during the cold, so that now, but for his advent, the whole town of the blind would have been asleep. He said Nunez must have been specially created to learn and serve the wisdom they had acquired, and that for all his mental incoherency and stumbling behavior he must have courage and do his best to learn, and at that all the people in the doorway murmured encouragingly. He said the night--for the blind call their day night--was now far gone, and it behoved every one to go back to sleep. He asked Nunez if he knew how to sleep, and Nunez said he did, but that before sleep he wanted food.

They brought him food--llama's milk in a bowl, and brought salted bread--and led him into a lonely place to eat out of their hearing, and afterwards to slumber until the chill of the mountain evening roused them to begin their day again. But Nunez slumbered not at all.

Instead, he sat up in the place where they had left him, resting his limbs and turning the unanticipated circumstances of his arrival over and over in his mind.

Every now and then he laughed, sometimes with amusement, and sometimes with indignation.

"Unformed mind!" he said. "Got no senses yet! They little know they've been insulting their heaven-sent king and master. I see I must bring them to reason. Let me think--let me think."

He was still thinking when the sun set.

Nunez had an eye for all beautiful things, and it seemed to him that the glow upon the snowfields and glaciers that rose about the valley on every side was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen. His eyes went from that inaccessible glory to the village and irrigated fields, fast sinking into the twilight, and suddenly a wave of emotion took him, and he thanked God from the bottom of his heart that the power of sight had been given him.

He heard a voice calling to him from out of the village. "Ya ho there, Bogota! Come hither!"

At that he stood up smiling. He would show these people once and for all what sight would do for a man. They would seek him, but not find him.

"You move no, Bogota," said the voice.

He laughed noiselessly, and made two stealthy steps aside from the path.

"Trample not on the grass, Bogota; that is not allowed."

Nunez had scarcely heard the sound he made himself. He stopped amazed.

The owner of the voice came running up the piebald path towards him.

He stepped back into the pathway. "Here I am," he said.

"Why did you not come when I called you?" said the blind man. "Must you be led like a child? Cannot you hear the path as you walk?"

Nunez laughed. I can see it," he said.

"There is no such word as see," said the blind man, after a pause. "Cease this folly, and follow the sound of my feet."

Nunez followed, a little annoyed.

"My time will come," he said.

"You'll learn," the blind man answered. "There is much to learn in the world."

"Has no one told you, 'In the Country of the Blind the One-eyed Man is King'?"

"What is blind?" asked the blind man carelessly over his shoulder.

Four days passed, and the fifth found the King of the Blind still incognito, as a clumsy and uselss stranger among his subjects.

It was, he found, much more difficult to proclaim himself than he had supposed, and in the meantime, while he meditated his coup d'état, he did what he was told and learnt the manners and customs of the Country of the Blind. He found working and going about at night a particularly irksome thing, and he decided that that should be the first thing he would change.

They led a simple, laborious life, these people, with all the elements of virtue and happiness, as these things can be understood by men. They toiled, but not oppressively; they had food and clothing sufficient for their needs; they had days and seasons of rest; they made much of music and singing, and there was love among them, and little children.

It was marvellous with what confidence and precision they went about their ordered world. Everything, you see, had been made to fit their needs; each of the radiating paths of the valley area had a constant angle to the others, and was distinguished by a special notch upon its kerbing; all obstacles and irregularities of path or meadow had long since been cleared away; all their methods and procedure arose naturally from their special needs. Their senses had become marvellously acute; they could hear and judge the slightest gesture of a man a dozen paces away--could hear the very beating of his heart. Intonation had long replaced expression with them, and touches gesture, and their work with hoe and spade and fork was as free and confident as garden work can be. Their sense of smell was extraordinarily fine; they could distinguish individual differences as readily as a dog can, and they went about the tending of the llamas, who lived among the rocks above and came to the wall for food and shelter, with ease and confidence. It was only when at last Nunez sought to assert himself that he found how easy and confident their movements could be.

He rebelled only after he had tried persuasion.

He tried at first on several occasions to tell them of sight. "Look you here, you people," he said. "There are things you do not understand in me."

Once or twice one or two of them attended to him; they sat with faces downcast and ears turned intelligently towards him, and he did his best to tell them what it was to see. Among his hearers was a girl, with eyelids less red and sunken than the others, so that one could almost fancy she was hiding eyes, whom especially he hoped to persuade. He spoke of the beauties of sight, of watching the mountains, of the sky and the sunrise, and they heard him with amused incredulity that presently became condemnatory. They told him there were indeed no mountains at all, but that the end of the rocks where the llamas grazed was indeed the end of the world; thence sprang a cavernous roof of the universe, from which the dew and the avalances fell; and when he maintained stoutly the world had neither end nor roof such as they supposed, they said his thoughts were wicked. So far as he could describe sky and clouds and stars to them it seemed to them a hideous void, a terrible blankness in the place of the smooth roof to things in which they believed--it was an article of faith with them that the cavern roof was exquisitely smooth to the touch. He saw that in some manner he shocked them, and gave up that aspect of the matter altogether, and tried to show them the practical value of sight. One morning he saw Pedro in the path called Seventeen and coming towards the central houses, but still too far off for hearing or scent, and he told them as much. "In a little while," he prophesied, "Pedro will be here." An old man remarked that Pedro had no business on path Seventeen, and then, as if in confirmation, that individual as he drew near turned and went transversely into path Ten, and so back with nimble paces towards the outer wall. They mocked Nunez when Pedro did not arrive, and afterwards, when he asked Pedro questions to clear his character, Pedro denied and outfaced him, and was afterwards hostile to him.

Then he induced them to let him go a long way up the sloping meadows towards the wall with one complacent individual, and to him he promised to describe all that happened among the houses. He noted certain goings and comings, but the things that really seemed to signify to these people happened inside of or behind the windowless houses--and of these he could see or tell nothing; and it was after the failure of this attempt, and the ridicule they could not repress, that he resorted to force. He thought of seizing a spade and suddenly smiting one or two of them to earth, and so in fair combat showing the advantage of eyes. He went so far with that resolution as to seize his spade, and then he discovered a new thing about himself, and that was that it was impossible for him to hit a blind man in cold blood.

He hesitated, and found them all aware that he had snatched up the spade. They stood alert, with their heads on one side, and bent ears towards him for what he would do next.

"Put that spade down," said one, and he felt a sort of helpless horror. He came near obedience.

Then he thrust one backwards against a house wall, and fled past him and out of the village.

He went athwart one of their meadows, leaving a track of trampled grass behind his feet, and presently sat down by the side of one of their ways. He felt something of the buoyancy that comes to all men in the beginning of a fight, but more perplexity. He began to realise that you cannot even fight happily with creatures who stand upon a different mental basis to yourself. Far away he saw a number of men carrying spades and sticks come out of the street of houses, and advance in a spreading line along the several paths towards him. They advanced slowly, speaking frequently to one another, and ever and again the whole cordon would halt and sniff the air and listen.

The first time they did this Nunez laughed. But afterwards he did not laugh.

One struck his trail in the meadow grass, and came stooping and feeling his way along it.

For five minutes he watched the slow extension of the cordon, and then his vague dispositon to do something forthwith became frantic. He stood up, went a pace or so towards the circumferential wall, turned, and went back a little way. There they all stood in a crescent, still and listening.

He also stood still, gripping his spade very tightly in both hands. Should he charge them?

The pulse in his ears ran into the rhythm of "In the Country of the Blind the One-eyed Man is King!"

Should he charge them?

"Bogota!" called one. "Bogota! where are you?"

He gripped his spade still tighter, and advanced down the meadows towards the place of habitations, and directly he moved they converged upon him. "I'll hit them if they touch me," he swore; "by Heaven, I will. I'll hit." He called aloud, "Look here, I'm going to do what I like in this valley. Do you hear? I'm going to do what I like and go where I like!"

They were moving in upon him quickly, groping, yet moving rapidly. It was like playing blind man's buff, with everyone blindfolded except one. "Get hold of him!" cried one. He found himself in the arc of a loose curve of pursuers. He felt suddenly he must be active and resolute.

"You don't understand," he cried in a voice that was meant to be great and resolute, and which broke. "You are blind, and I can see. Leave me alone!"

"Bogota! Put down that spade, and come off the grass!"

The last order, grotesque in its urban familiarity, produced a gust of anger.

"I'll hurt you," he said, sobbing with emotion. "By Heaven, I'll hurt you. Leave me alone!"

He began to run, not knowing clearly where to run. He ran from the nearest blind man, because it was a horror to hit him. He stopped, and then made a dash to escape from their closing ranks. He made for where a gap was wide, and the men on either side, with a quick perception of the approach of his paces, rushed in on one another. He sprang forward, and then saw he must be caught, and swish! the spade had struck. He felt the soft thud of hand and arm, and the man was down with a yell of pain, and he was through.

Through! And then he was close to the street of houses again, and blind men, whirling spades and stakes, were running with a sort of reasoned swiftness hither and thither.

He heard steps behind him just in time, and found a tall man rushing forward and swiping at the sound of him. He lost his nerve, hurled his spade a yard wide at his antagonist, and whirled about and fled, fairly yelling as he dodged another.

He was panic-stricken. He ran furiously to and fro, dodging when there was no need to dodge, and in his anxiety to see on every side of him at once, stumbling. For a moment he was down and they heard his fall. Far away in the circumferential wall a little doorway looked like heaven, and he set off in a wild rush for it. He did not even look round at his pursuers until it was gained, and he had stumbled across the bridge, clambered a little way among the rocks, to the surprise and dismay of a young llama, who went leaping out of sight, and lay down sobbing for breath.

And so his coup d'état came to an end.

He stayed outside the wall of the valley of the Blind for two nights and days without food or shelter, and meditated upon the unexpected. During these meditations he repeated very frequently and always with a profounder note of derision the exploded proverb: "In the Country of the Blind the One-Eyed Man is King." He thought chiefly of ways of fighting and conquering these people, and it grew clear that for him no practicable way was possible. He had no weapons, and now it would be hard to get one.

The canker of civilisation had got to him even in Bogota, and he could not find it in himself to go down and assassinate a blind man. Of course, if he did that, he might then dictate terms on the threat of assassinating them all. But--sooner or later he must sleep!....

He tried also to find food among the pine trees, to be comfortable under pine boughs while the frost fell at night, and--with less confidence--to catch a llama by artifice in order to try to kill it--perhaps by hammering it with a stone--and so finally, perhaps, to eat some of it. But the llamas had a doubt of him and regarded him with distrustful brown eyes, and spat when he drew near. Fear came on him the second day and fits of shivering. Finally he crawled down to the wall of the Country of the Blind and tried to make terms. He crawled along by the stream, shouting, until two blind men came out to the gate and talked to him.

"I was mad," he said. "But I was only newly made."

They said that was better.

He told them he was wiser now, and repented of all he had done.

Then he wept without intention, for he was very weak and ill now, and they took that as a favourable sign.

They asked him if he still thought he could "see".

"No," he said. "That was folly. The word means nothing--less than nothing!"

They asked him what was overhead.

"About ten times ten the height of a man there is a roof above the world--of rock--and very, very smooth."....He burst again into hysterical tears. "Before you ask me any more, give me some food or I shall die."

He expected dire punishments, but these blind people were capable of toleration. They regarded his rebellion as but one more proof of his general idiocy and inferiority; and after they had whipped him they appointed him to do the simplest and heaviest work they had for anyone to do, and he, seeing no other way of living, did submissively what he was told.

He was ill for some days, and they nursed him kindly. That refined his submission. But they insisted on his lying in the dark, and that was a great misery. And blind philosophers came and talked to him of the wicked levity of his mind, and reproved him so impressively for his doubts about the lid of rock that covered their cosmic casserole that he almost doubted whether indeed he was not the victim of hallucination in not seeing it overhead.

So Nunez became a citizen of the Country of the Blind, and these people ceased to be a generalised people and became individualities and familiar to him, while the world beyond the mountains became more and more remote and unreal. There was Yacob, his master, a kindly man when not annoyed; there was Pedro, Yacob's nephew; and there was Medina-saroté, who was the youngest daughter of Yacob. She was little esteemed in the world of the blind, because she had a clear-cut face, and lacked that satisfying, glossy smoothness that is the blind man's ideal of feminine beauty; but Nunez thought her beautiful at first, and presently the most beautiful thing in the whole creation. Her closed eyelids were not sunken and red after the common way of the valley, but lay as though they might open again at any moment; and she had long eyelashes, which were considered a grave disfigurement. And her voice was stron and did not satisfy the acute hearing of the valley swains. So that she had no lover.

There came a time when Nunez thought that, could he win her, he would be resigned to live in the valley for all the rest of his days.

He watched her; he sought opportunities of doing her little services, and presently found that she observed him. Once at a rest-day gathering they sat side by side in the dim starlight, and the music was sweet. His hand came upon hers and he dared to clasp it. Then very tenderly she returned his pressure. And one day, as they were at their meal in the darkness, he felt her hand very softly seeking him, and as it chanced the fire leapt then and he saw the tenderness of her face.

He sought to speak to her.

He went to her one day when shewas sitting in the summer moonlight spinning. The light made her a thing of silver and mystery. He sat down at her feet and told her he loved her, and told her how beautiful she seemed to him. He had a lover's voice, he spoke with a tender reverence that came near to awe, and she had never before been touched by adoration. She made him no definite answer, but it was clear his words pleased her.

After that he talked to her whenever he could take an opportunity. The valley became the world for him, and the world beyond the mountains where men lived in sunlight seemed no more than a fairy tale he would some day pour into her ears. Very tentatively and timidly he spoke to her of sight.

Sight seemed to her the most poetical of fancies, and she listened to his description of the stars and the mountains and her own sweet white-lit beauty as though it was a guilty indulgence. She did not believe, she could only half understand, but she was mysteriously delighted, and it seemed to him that she completely understood.

His love lost its awe and took courage. Presently he was for demanding her of Yacob and the elders in marriage, but she became fearful and delayed. And it was one of her elder sisters who first told Yacob that Medine-saroté and Nunez were in love.

There was from the first very great opposition to the marriage of Nunez and Medina-saroté; not so much because they valued her as because they held him as a being apart, an idiot, incompetent thing below the permissible level of man. Her sisters opposed it bitterly as bringing discredit on them all; and old Yacob, though he had formed a sort of liking for his clumsy, obedient serf, shook his head and said the thing could not be. The young men were all angry at the idea of corrupting the race, and one went so far as to revile and strike Nunez. He struck back. Then for the first time he found an advantage in seeing, even by twilight, and after that fight was over no one was disposed to raise a hand against him. But they still found his marriage impossible.

Old Yacob had a tenderness for his last little daughter, and was grieved to have her weep upon his shoulder.

"You see, my dear, he's an idiot. He has delusions; he can't do anything right."

"I know," wept Medina-saroté. "But he's better than he was. He's getting better. And he's strong, dear father, and kind--stronger and kinder than any other man in the world. And he loves me--and, father, I love him."

Old Yacob was greatly distressed to find her inconsolable, and, besides--what made it more distressing--he liked Nunez for many things. So he went and sat in the windowless council-chamber with the other elders and watched the trend of the talk, and said, at the proper time, "He's better than he was. Very likely, some day, we shall find him as sane as ourselves."

Then afterwards one of the elders, who thought deeply, had an idea. He was the great doctor among these people, their medicine-man, and he had a very philosophical and inventive mind, and the idea of curing Nunez of his peculiarities appealed to him. One day when Yacob was present he returned to the topic of Nunez.

"I have examined Bogota," he said, "and the case is clearer to me. I think very probably he might be cured."

"That is what I have always hoped," said old Yacob.

"His brain is affected," said the blind doctor.

The elders murmured assent.

"Now, what affects it?

"Ah!" said old Yacob.

"This," said the doctor, answering his own question. "Those queer things that are called eyes, and which exist to make an agreeable soft depression in the face, are diseased, in the case of Bogota, in such a way as to affect his brain. They are greatly distended, he has eyelashes, and his eyelids move, and consequently his brain is in a state of constant irritation and distraction."

"Yes?" said old Yacob. "Yes?"

"And I think I may say with reasonable certainty that, in order to cure him completely, all that we need do is a simple and easy surgical operation--namely, to remove these irritant bodies."

"And then he will be sane?"

"Then he will be perfectly sane, and a quite admirable citizen."

"Thank Heaven for science!" said old Yacob, and went forth at once to tell Nunez of his happy hopes.

But Nunez's manner of receiving the good news struck him as being cold and disappointing.

"One might think," he said, "from the tone you take, that you did not care for my daughter."

It was Medina-saroté who persuaded Nunez to face the blind surgeons.

"You do not want me," he said, "to lose my gift of sight?"

She shook her head.

"My world is sight."

Her head drooped lower.

"There are the beautiful things, the beautiful little things--the flowers, the lichens among the rocks, the lightness and softness on a piece of fur, the far sky with its drifting down of clouds, the sunsets and the stars. And there is you. For you alone it is good to have sight, to see your sweet, serene face, your kindly lips, your dear, beautiful hands folded together....It is these eyes of mine you won, these eyes that hold me to you, that these idiots seek. Instead, I must touch you, hear you, and never see you again. I must come under that roof of rock and stone and darkness, that horrible roof under which your imagination stoops....No; you would not have me do that?"

A disagreeable doubt had arisen in him. He stopped, and left the thing a question.

"I wish," she said, "sometimes----" She paused.

"Yes," said he, a little apprehensively.

"I wish sometimes--you would not talk like that."

"Like what?"

"I know it's pretty--it's your imagination. I love it, but now---"

He felt cold. "Now?" he said faintly.

She sat quite still.

"You mean--you think--I should be better, better perhaps----"

He was realising things very swiftly. He felt anger, indeed anger at the dull course of fate, but also sympathy for her lack of understanding--a sympathy near akin to pity.

"Dear," he said, and he could see by her whiteness how intensely her spirit pressed against the things she could not say. He put his arms about her, he kissed her ear, and they sat for a time in silence.

"If I were to consent to this?" he said at last, in a voice that was very gentle.

She flung her arms about him, weekping wildly. "Oh, if you would," she sobbed, "if only you would!"

For a week before the operation that was to raise him from his servitude and inferiority to the level of a blind citizen, Nunez knew nothing of sleep, and all through the warm sunlit hours, while the others slumbered happily, he sat brooding or wandered aimlessly, trying to bring his mind to bear on his dilemma. He had given his answer, he had given his consent, and still he was not sure. And at last work-time was over, the sun rose in splendour over the golden crests, and his last day of vision began for him. He had a few minutes with Medina-saroté before she went apart to sleep.

"To-morrow," he said, "I shall see no more."

"Dear heart!" she answered, and pressed his hands with all her strength.

"They will hurt you but little," she said; "and you are going through this pain--you are going through it, dear lover, for me... Dear, if a woman's heart and life can do it, I will repay you. My dearest one, my dearest with the tender voice, I will repay."

He was drenched in pity for himself and her.

He held her in his arms, and pressed his lips to hers, and looked on her sweet face for the last time. "Good-bye!" he whispered at that dear sight, "good-bye!"

And then in silence he turned away from her.

She could hear his slow retreating footsteps, and something in the rhythm of them threw her into a passion of weeping.

He had fully meant to go to a lonely place where the meadows were beautiful with white narcissus, and there remain until the hour of his sacrifice should come, but as he went he lifted up his eyes and saw the morning, the morning like an angel in golden armour, marching down the steeps....

It seemed to him that before this splendour he, and this blind world in the valley, and his love, and all, were no more than a pit of sin.

He did not turn aside as he had meant to do, but went on, and passed through the wall of the circumference and out upon the rocks, and his eyes were always upon the sunlit ice and snow.

He saw their infinite beauty, and his imagination soared over them to the things beyond he was now to resign for ever.

He thought of that great free world he was parted from, the world that was his own, and he had a vision of those further slopes, distance beyond distance, with Bogota, a place of multitudinous stirring beauty, a glory by day, a luminous mystery by night, a place of palaces and fountains and statues and white houses, lying beautifully in the middle distance. He thought how for a day or so one might come down through passes, drawing ever nearer and nearer to its busy streets and ways. He thought of the river journey, day by day from great Bogota to the still vaster world beyond, through towns and villages, forest and desert places, the rushing river day by day, until its banks receded and the big steamers came splashing by, and one had reached the sea--the limitless sea, with its thousand islands, its thousands of islands, and its ships seen dimly far away in their incessant journeyings round and about that greater world. And there, unpent by mountains, one saw the sky--the sky, not such a disc as one saw it here, but an arch of immeasurable blue, a deep of deeps in which the circling stars were floating....

His eyes scrutinised the great curtain of the mountains with a keener inquiry.

For example, if one went so, up that gully and to the chimney there, then one might come out high among those stunted pines that ran round in a sort of shelf and rose still higher and higher as it passed above the gorge. And then? That talus might be managed. Thence perhaps a climb might be found to take him up to the precipice that came below the snow; and if that chimney failed, then another farther to the east might serve his purpose better. And then? Then one would be out upon the amber-lit snow there, and half-way up to the crest of those beautiful desolations.

He glanced back at the village, then turned right round and regarded it steadfastly.

He though of Medina-saroté, and she had become small and remote.

He turned again towards the mountain wall, down which the day had come to him.

Then very circumspectly he began to climb.

When sunset came he was no longer climbing, but he was far and high. He had been higher, but he was still very high. His clothes were torn, his limbs were blood-stained, he was bruised in many places, but he lay as if he were at his ease, and there was a smile on his face.

From where he rested the valley seemed as if it were in a pit and nearly a mile below. Already it was dim with haze and shadow, though the mountain summits around him were things of light and fire. The mountain summits around him were things of light and fire, and the little details of the rocks near at hand were drenched with subtle beauty--a vein of green mineral piercing the grey, the flash of crystal faces here and there, a minute, minutely-beautiful orange lichen close beside his face. There were deep mysterious shadows in the gorge, blue deepening into purple, and purple into a luminous darkness, and overhead was the illimitable vastness of the sky. But he heeded these things no longer, but lay quite inactive there, smiling as if he were satisfied merely to have escaped from the valley of the Blind in which he had thought to be King.

The glow of the sunset passed, and the night came, and still he lay peacefull contented under the cold clear stars.

Study Questions:

1. Can you explain the significance of the first three paragraphs? Just what information do they include? Is it necessary? In what way does it prepare us for what is to follow?

2. The fourth paragraph contains the "beginning" of the action. What are we told here about the hero? How much more do we know about him when the story closes?

3. Is the accident that precipitates the story credible? In what way?

4. Find the description of the valley. In what way did the valley seem strange to Nunez?

5. Why do you think Wells inserted the old proverb about the one-eyed man? Does this tale prove it to be true or false? Explain.

6. How did the blind people regard Nunez? Is it fair to say that neither understood the other? Explain.

7. Read the sentences beginning "Blind men of genius..." and concluding with "...New and saner explanations." Is this irony? Explain. Find other examples of irony.

8. Why did Nunez have such difficulty explaining sight to these people? Can you think of any way that would have been more effective?

9. First Nunez tried persuasion. Then he used force. How did the latter method succeed?

10. When did Nunez's smugness give way to despair?

11. Why did Nunez return after his first effort to escape?

12. What was demanded of him? Why were these demands made?

13. Why did Yacob and the others dislike the idea of Nunez marrying Medinasarote?

14. What did the doctor conclude caused Nunez to be different?

15. The doctor said that Nunez would be an admirable citizen and "sane" once his eyes were removed. What irony do you see here?

16. Do you think that Wells feels a good citizen should conform to everything about him and be agreeable? How do you know what the author thinks?

17. Read the four one-sentence paragraphs near the end of the story. What purpose do they serve?

18. Is the valley symbolical, do you think? If so, of what? Why is Nunez content to lie on the mountains, not even looking at the beauty of the night? What do you think the mountain symbolizes?

19. Read the last two paragraphs again. Note the visual imagery. Has this been noticeable before? Can you explain this?

Writing Exercises:

1. Have you ever had difficulty communicating an idea to someone? If you have one point of view toward a controversial subject and your friend another, why is it important for you to "see" (not necessarily agree with) his point of view? Do you know people who are blind to any ideas other than their own? Explain in a paragraph why it is important for people to be able to see other views than their own.

2. In order to see for yourself the different worlds Nunez and the blind men "saw", describe the valley as it appeared to Nunez and then describe it as it seemed to the inhabitants. Remember to use concrete details and to be specific.

3. Try to visualize the little nation, the "Country of the Blind." Make a map showing the village, the farmland, the meadows, and the surrounding mountains. Then, using your map as a guide, write a paragraph describing the valley. In your Rhetoric Units last year, you learned to use certain organizing principles in your writing. Which would be most effective here?

4. When he discovered the valley, Nunez recalled the saying, "In the Country of the Blind the One-eyed Man is King." Think this statement over. What do you think it implies? Write a paragraph explaining what you think this means.

"A Double-Dyed Deceiver"

by O. Henry

INTRODUCTION

If a person has been imbued with certain ideas so thoroughly that he can no more change his opinions than a leopard can change his spots, we say that he is "dyed in the wool." Thus, when speaking of someone who refuses to eat any kind of meat, we might call him a dyed-in-the-wool vegetarian. Thacker, one of the characters in this story, calls the Kid a "double-dyed traitor." This is even stronger language than "dyed-in-the-wool." Why do you suppose the author changed the phrase to "A double-dyed deceiver" for the title of his story?

As you read the story, keep the title in mind. It will help to explain some of the techniques O. Henry uses as he writes this tale of deception. Read the story through completely before you prepare to discuss the study questions.

(For text, see The Complete Works of O. Henry, DeLuxe Edition, by O. Henry; Garden City Publishing Company, New York, 1937; beginning on p. 412 with "The trouble began in. . ." and ending on p. 420 with ". . . young Don Francisco Urique.")

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why do you suppse that O. Henry did not reveal until the end of the story that the man the Kid had killed in Laredo was the Urique heir? Is there any clue earlier in the story that might have led you to this conclusion? If this piece of information had been put in the beginning, would the story have been as interesting?

2. Is the Kid's change of heart at the end of the story convincing? Are you convinced of his concern for his "mother" that makes him stay on in the rolè of Francisco Urique? Is there a possibility that he had planned in advance to maintain his new identity? Can you find evidence in the story to support your opinion?

3. How many examples of coincidence can you find in the story? Are the coincidences plausible? What part do they play in shaping the story?

4. What do you know about the Kid? Do you follow his story with any emotion Why or why not? Is this deliberate on the part of the author, or is it a weakness in the story?

5. Most literary works have subjects that can be discussed on various levels, apart from the story line itself. The ideas, or abstract subjects, are usually about important aspects of human existence. Are there any such ideas conveyed through this story? If so, do they seem significant to you?

6. Much of the story is told through dialogue. What do the Kid's conversations with both Captain Boone and Thacker reveal about all three characters? What else does O. Henry accomplish through this method of story telling?

7. Look again at the beginning of the story. Compare the style of this language with the conversations you have just discussed. Does it seem appropriate to the subject of the story? Now that you know how the story ends, can you see any reason for O. Henry to adopt this tone in the beginning? Does it in any way reveal the author's attitude toward his subject?

8. Why does the author suddenly jump from the Kid boarding the ship to his calling on Thacker in his office, without any transition whatsoever? Later in the story, a whole month elapses between the ending of one paragraph and the beginning of the next. Does this remind you of any other type of literature you have studied? How does this technique contribute to the effect the author is trying to produce?

9. Which of the characters appear to be types or stock characters? What details has O. Henry used to suggest this impression?

10. Has the author sentimentalized the character of Senora Urique? (Better look this word up in your dictionary.) How does this affect your attitude to the deception the Kid uses on her?

11. Does the title prepare you for the outcome of the story? Is the ending a satisfying one? Give reasons for your answers.

12. What are the major conflicts of the story? How are they used to build suspense?

13. Explain the allusion to The Prodigal Son. Why is it ironic used in this story. What other examples of irony can you find?

14. What impression does this story leave you with? What popular form of modern entertainment does it resemble? Is it close to real life? Do you think it was intended to be?

15. How many instances of deception can you find in the story? Is the Kid the only deceiver?

SUGGESTED EXERCISES AND WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. List the events of the story in the order in which they happened, labeling them a, b, c, etc. Next, draw a diagram of the rising and falling action of the plot, using the a, b, c labels from the incidents you have listed. Which incident do you think marks the high point of the story? Give your reasons.

2. The setting plays a very important part in "A Double-Dyed Deceiver." Skim through the story to find references to the geography, the type of country, and the relationship between the Spanish-speaking people and the Americans.

   a) Locate on a map the places mentioned: Laredo, the Rio Grande, Nueces River, Corpus Christi, the Gulf of Mexico, Hidalgo.
   b) If you are not familiar with the terms: mesquite, chaparral, and prickly pear, use the dictionary to find out the meanings.
   c) Consult an encyclopedia to find out something about the history of Spain and the United States in the Gulf Coast region of America.

   When you have completed your research, write a few paragraphs describing life along the Rio Grande border at the time the story was written.

3. Using evidence from the story, write a character sketch of the Llano Kid. Try to decide whether or not he is completely phony. Is he sincere in his statement to Thacker that pity for Señora Urique has motivated his final decision? Give reasons for your opinions.

4. Study the conversation between Thacker and the Kid at their first meeting. Notice how Thacker's character is revealed as he speaks. What else does the reader discover through the conversation?
   Write a similar scene between Señora Urique and the Kid, using conversation to reveal the kind of woman you imagine Señora Urique to be, and getting across to the reader anything else it may be important for him to know.

A MYSTERY OF HEROISM

by Stephen Crane

INTRODUCTION

The story records an incident in the War Between the States. Crane has written about it so dramatically that you will feel almost as though you were an onlooker. Read it through without interruption, then spend a little time thinking about your response to the story. How did you feel as you read it? Did it set you to thinking about the nature of heroism? Did you recall experiences of your own brought to mind by the story?

The dark uniforms of the men were so coated with dust from the incessant wrestling of the two armies that the regiment almost seemed a part of the clay bank which shielded them from the shells. On the top of the hill a battery was arguing in tremendous roars with some other guns, and to the eye of the infantry the artillerymen, the guns, the caissons, the horses, were distinctly outlined upon the blue sky. When a piece was fired, a red streak as round as a log flashed low in the heavens, like a monstrous bolt of lightning. The men of the battery wore white duck trousers, which somehow emphasized their legs; and when they ran and crowded in little groups at the bidding of the shouting officers, it was more impressive than usual to the infantry.

Fred Collins, of A Company, was saying: "Thunder! I wisht I had a drink. Ain't there any water round here?" Then somebody yelled: "There goes th' bugler!"

As the eyes of half the regiment swept in one machinelike movement, there was an instant's picture of a horse in a great convulsive leap of a death wound and a rider leaning back with a crooked arm and spread fingers before his face. On the ground was the crimson terror of an exploding shell, with fibers of flame that seemed like lances. A glittering bugle swung clear of the rider's back as fell headlong the horse and the man. In the air was an odor as from a conflagration.

Sometimes they of the infantry looked down at a fair little meadow which spread at their feet. Its long green grass was rippling gently in a breeze. Beyond it was the gray form of a house half torn to pieces by shells and by the busy axes of soldiers who had pursued firewood. The line of an old fence was now dimly marked by long weeds and by an occasional post. A shell had blown the well-house to fragments. Little lines of gray smoke ribboning upward from some embers indicated the place where had stood the barn.

From beyond a curtain of green woods there came the sound of some stupendous scuffle, as if two animals of the size of islands were fighting. At a distance there were occasional appearances of swift-moving men, horses, batteries, flags, and with the crashing of infantry volleys were heard, often, wild and frenzied cheers. In the midst of it all Smith and Ferguson, two privates of A Company, were engaged in a heated discussion which involved the greatest questions of the national existence.

The battery on the hill presently engaged in a frightful duel. The white legs of the gunners scampered this way and that way, and the officers redoubled their shouts. The guns, with their demeanors of stolidity and courage, were typical of something infinitely self-possessed in this clamor of death that swirled around the hill.

One of a "swing" team was suddenly smitten quivering to the ground, and his maddened brethren dragged his torn body in their struggle to escape from this turmoil and danger. A young soldier astride one of the leaders swore and fumed in his saddle and furiously jerked at the bridle. An officer screamed out an order so violently that his voice broke and ended the sentence in a falsetto shriek.

The leading company of the infantry regiment was somewhat exposed, and the colonel ordered it moved more fully under the shelter of the hill. There was the clank of steel against steel.

A lieutenant of the battery rode down and passed them, holding his right arm carefully in his left hand. And it was as if this arm was not at all a part of him, but belonged to another man. His sober and reflective charger went slowly. The officer's face was grimy and perspiring, and his uniform was tousled as if he had been in direct grapple with an enemy. He smiled grimly when the men stared at him. He turned his horse toward the meadow.

Collins, of A Company, said: "I wisht I had a drink. I bet there's water in that there ol' well yonder!"

"Yes; but how you goin' to git it?"

For the little meadow which intervened was now suffering a terrible onslaught of shells. Its green and beautiful calm had vanished utterly. Brown earth was being flung in monstrous handfuls. And there was a massacre of the young blades of grass. They were being torn, burned, obliterated. Some curious fortune of the battle had made this gentle little meadow the object of the red hate of the shells, and each one as it exploded seemed like an imprecation in the face of a maiden.

The wounded officer who was riding across this expanse said to himself: "Why, they couldn't shoot any harder if the whole army was massed here!"

A shell struck the gray ruins of the house, and as, after the roar, the shattered wall fell in fragments, there was a noise which resembled the flapping of shutters during a wild gale of winter. Indeed, the infantry paused in the shelter of the bank appeared as men standing upon a shore contemplating a madness of the sea. The angel of calamity had under its glance the battery upon the hill. Fewer white-legged men labored about the guns. A shell had smitten one of the pieces, and after the flare, the smoke, the dust, the wrath of this blow were gone, it was possible to see white legs stretched horizontally upon the ground. And at that interval to the rear where it is the business of battery horses to stand with their noses to the fight, awaiting the command to drag their guns out of the destruction, or into it, or wheresoever these incomprehensible humans demanded with whip and spur--in this line of passive and dumb spectators, whose fluttering hearts yet would not let them forget the iron laws of man's control of them--in this rank of brute soldiers there had been relentless and hideous carnage. From the ruck of bleeding and prostrate horses, the men of the infantry could see one animal raising its stricken body with its forelegs and turning its nose with mystic and profound eloquence toward the sky.

Some comrades joked Collins about his thirst. "Well, if yeh want a drink so bad, why don't yeh go git it?"

"Well, I will in a minnet, if yeh don't shut up!"

A lieutenant of artillery floundered his horse straight down the hill with as little concern as if it were level ground. As he galloped past the colonel of the infantry, he threw up his hand in swift salute. "We've got to get out of that," he roared angrily. He was a black-bearded officer, and his eyes, which resembled beads, sparkled like those of an insane man. His jumping horse sped along the column of infantry.

The fat major, standing carelessly with his sword held horizontally behind him and with his legs far apart, looked after the receding horseman and laughed. "He wants to get back with orders pretty quick, or there'll be no batt'ry left," he observed.

The wise young captain of the second company hazarded to the lieutenant colonel that the enemy's infantry would probably soon attack the hill, and the lieutenant colonel snubbed him.

A private in one of the rear companies looked out over the meadow, and then turned to a companion and said, "Look there, Jim!" It was the wounded officer from the battery, who some time before had started to ride across the meadow, supporting his right arm carefully with his left hand. This man had encountered a shell apparently at a time when no one perceived him, and he could now be seen lying face downward with a stirruped foot stretched across the body of his dead horse. A leg of the charger extended slantingly upward, precisely as stiff as a stake. Around this motionless pair the shells still howled.

There was a quarrel in A Company. Collins was shaking his fist in the faces of some laughing comrades. "Dern yeh! I ain't afraid t'go. If yeh say much, I will go!"

"Of course, yeh will! You'll run through that there medder, won't yeh?"

Collins said, in a terrible voice: "You see now!" At this ominous threat his comrades broke into renewed jeers.

Collins gave them a dark scowl, and went to find his captain. The latter was conversing with the colonel of the regiment.

"Captain," said Collins, saluting and standing at atten tion--in those days all trousers bagged at the knees--"Captain, I want t' git permission to go git some water from that there well over yonder!"

The colonel and the captain swung about simultaneously and stared across the meadow. The captain laughed. "You must be pretty thirsty, Collins?"

"Yes, sir, I am."

"Well--ah," said the captain. After a moment, he asked, "Can't you wait?"

"No, sir."

The colonel was watching Collins's face. "Look here, my lad," he said, in a pious sort of voice--"look here, my lad"--Collins was not a lad--"don't you think that's taking pretty big risks for a little drink of water?"

"I dunno," said Collins uncomfortably. Some of the resentment toward his companions, which perhaps had forced him into this affair, was beginning to fade. "I dunno wether 'tis."

The colonel and the captain contemplated him for a time.

"Well," said the captain finally.

"Well," said the colonel, "if you want to go, why, go."

Collins saluted. "Much obliged t'yeh."

As he moved away the colonel called after him. "Take some of the other boys' canteens with you, an' hurry back, now."

"Yes, sir, I will."

The colonel and the captain looked at each other then, for it had suddenly occurred that they could not for the life of them tell whether Collins wanted to go or whether he did not.

They turned to regard Collins, and as they perceived him surrounded by gesticulating comrades, the colonel said: "Well, by thunder! I guess he's going."

Collins appeared as a man draming. In the midst of the questions, the advice, the warnings, all the excited talk of his company mates, he maintained a curious silence.

They were very busy in preparing him for his ordeal. When they inspected him carefully, it was somewhat like the examination that grooms give a horse before a race; and they were amazed, staggered, by the whole affair. Their astonishment found vent in strange repetitions.

"Are yeh sure a-goin'?" they demanded again and again.

"Certainly I am," cried Collins at last, furiously.

He strode sullenly away from them. He was swinging five or six canteens by their cords. It seemed that his cap would not remain firmly on his head, and often he reached and pulled it down over his brow.

There was a general movement in the compact column. The long animal-like thing moved slightly. Its four hundred eyes were turned upon the figure of Collins.

"Well, sir, if that ain't th' derndest thing! I never thought Fred Collins had the blood in him for that kind of business."

"What's he goin' to do, anyhow?"

"He's goin' to that well there after water."

"We ain't dyin' of thirst, are we? That's foolishness."

"Well, somebody put him up to it, an' he's doin' it."

"Say, he must be a desperate cuss."

When Collins faced the meadow and walked away from the regiment, he was vaguely conscious that a chasm, the deep valley of all prides, was suddenly between him and his comrades. It was provisional, but the provision was that he return as a victor. He had blindly been led by quaint emotions, and laid himself under an obligation to walk squarely up to the face of death.

But he was not sure that he wished to make a retraction, even if he could do so without shame. As a matter of truth, he was sure of very little. He was mainly surprised.

It seemed to him supernaturally strange that he had allowed his mind to maneuver his body into such a situation. He understood that it might be called dramatically great.

However, he had no full appreciation of anything, excepting that he was actually conscious of being dazed. He could feel his dulled mind groping after the form and color of this incident. He wondered why he did not feel some keen agony of fear cutting his sense like a knife. He wondered at this, because human expression had said loudly for centuries that men should feel afraid of certain things, and that all men who did not feel this fear were phenomena--heroes.

He was, then, a hero. He suffered that disappointment which we would all have if we discovered that we were ourselves capable of those deeds which we most admire in history and legend. This, then, was a hero. After all, heroes were not much.

No, it could not be true. He was not a hero. Heroes had no shames in their lives, and, as for him, he remembered borrowing fifteen dollars from a friend and promising to pay it back the next day, and then avoiding that friend for ten months. When, at home, his mother had aroused him for the early labor of his life on the farm, it had often been his fashion to be irritable, childish, diabolical; and his mother had died since he had come to the war.

He saw that, in this matter of the well, the canteens, the shells, he was an intruder in the land of fine deeds.

He was now about thirty paces from his comrades. The regiment had just turned its many faces toward him.

From the forest of terrific noises there suddenly emerged a little uneven line of men. They fired fiercely and rapidly at distant foliage on which appeared little puffs of white smoke. The spatter of skirmish firing was added to the thunder of the guns on the hill. The little line of men ran forward. A color sergeant fell flat with his flag as if he had slipped on ice. There was hoarse cheering from this distant field.

Collins suddenly felt that two demon fingers were pressed into his ears. He could see nothing but flying arrows, flaming red. He lurched from the shock of this explosion, but he made a mad rush for the house, which he viewed as a man submerged to the neck in a boiling surf might view the shore. In the air little pieces of shell howled, and the earthquake explosions drove him insane with the menace of their roar. As he ran the canteens knocked together with a rhythmical tinkling.

As he neared the house, each detail of the scene became vivid to him. He was aware of some bricks of the vanished chimney lying on the sod. There was a door which hung by one hinge.

Rifle bullets called forth by the insistent skirmishers came from the far-off bank of foliage. They mingled with the shells and the pieces of shells until the air was torn in all directions by hootings, yells, howls. The sky was full of fiends who directed all their wild rage at his head.

When he came to the well, he flung himself face downward and peered into its darkness. There were furtive silver glintings some feet from the surface. He grabbed one of the canteens and, unfastening its cap, swung it down by the cord. The water flowed slowly in with an indolent gurgle.

And now, as he lay with his face turned away, he was suddenly smitten with the terror. It came upon his heart like the grasp of claws. All the power faded from his muscles. For an instant he was no more than a dead man.

The canteen filled with a maddening slowness, in the manner of all bottles. Presently he recovered his strength and addressed a screaming oath to it. He leaned over until it seemed as if he intended to try to push water into it with his hands. His eyes as he gazed down into the well shone like two pieces of metal, and in their expression was a great appeal and a great curse. The stupid water derided him.

There was the blaring thunder of a shell. Crimson light shone through the swift-boiling smoke, and made a pink reflection on part of the wall of the well. Collins jerked out his arm and canteen with the same motion that a man would use in withdrawing his head from a furnace.

He scrambled erect and glared and hesitated. On the ground near him lay the old well bucket, with a length of rusty chain. He lowered it swiftly into the well. The bucket struck the water and then, turning lazily over, sank. When, with hand reaching tremblingly over hand, he hauled it out, it knocked often against the walls of the well and spilled some of its contents.

In running with a filled bucket, a man can adopt but one kind of gait. So, through this terrible field over which screamed practical angels of death, Collins ran in the manner of a farmer chased out of a dairy by a bull.

His face went staring white with anticipating--anticipation of a blow that would whirl him around and down. He would fall as he had seen other men fall, the life knocked out of them so suddenly that their knees were no more quick to touch the ground than their heads. He saw the long blue line of the regiment, but his comrades were standing looking at him from the edge of an impossible star. He was aware of some deep wheelruts and hoofprints in the sod beneath his feet.

The artillery officer who had fallen in this meadow had been making groans in the teeth of the tempest of sound. These futile cries, wrenched from him by his agony, were heard only by shells, bullets. When wild-eyed Collins came running, this officer raised himself. His face contorted and blanched from pain, he was about to utter some great beseeching cry. But suddenly his face straightened, and he called: "Say, young man, give me a drink of water, will you?"

Collins had no room amid his emotions for surprise. He was mad from the threats of destruction.

"I can't!" he screamed, and in his reply was a full description of his quaking apprehension. His cap was gone and his hair was riotous. His clothes made it appear that he had been dragged over the ground by the heels. He ran on.

The officer's head sank down, and one elbow crooked. His foot in its brass-bound stirrup still stretched over the body of his horse, and the other leg was under the steed.

But Collins turned. He came dashing back. His face had now turned gray, and in his eyes was all terror. "Here it is! here it is!"

The officer was as a man gone in drink. His arm bent like a twig. His head drooped as if his neck were of willow. He was sinking to the ground, to lie face downward.

Collins grabbed him by the shoulder. "Here it is. Here's your drink. Turn over. Turn over, man, for God's sake!"

With Collins hauling at his shoulder, the officer twisted his body and fell with his face turned toward that region where lived the unspeakable noises of the swirling missiles. There was the faintest shadow of a smile on his lips as he looked at Collins. He gave a sigh, a little primitive breath like that from a child.

Collins tried to hold the bucket steadily, but his shaking hands caused the water to splash all over the face of the dying man. Then he jerked it away and ran on.

The regiment gave him a welcoming roar. The grimed faces were wrinkled in laughter.

His captain waved the bucket away. "Give it to the men!"

The two genial, skylarking young lieutenants were the first to gain possession of it. They played over it in their fashion.

When one tried to drink, the other teasingly knocked his elbow. "Don't Billie! You'll make me spill it," said the one. The other laughed.

Suddenly there was an oath, the thud of wood on the ground, and a swift murmur of astonishment among the ranks. The two lietenants glared at each other. The bucket lay on the ground empty.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Does the story follow the typical narrative pattern of beginning, middle, and end? What are the main events in the order in which they happened? Do these events by themselves provide the main interest of the story? Why or why not?

2. On the surface level, the story is about a soldier who goes after some water in the middle of a battle field. What is the subject on a deeper level?

3. Why does Collins go after the water? Is his action entirely voluntary, or do circumstances beyond his control force him into it?

4. Have you ever known anyone like Fred Collins? Does he strike you as being a real person? Read again Crane's description of Collins's feelings as he crossed the battle field. Is it plausible? You may remember Saint-Exupéry made a similar discovery when he found he was quite without emotion as he battled the storm in his plane. Talking about the experience afterwards, in "The Elements" from Wind, Sand and Stars, he said:

> "There is nothing dramatic in the world, nothing pathetic, except in human relations."

In other words, horror is not present while something happens; it can only be looked at with horror afterwards. Why do you think terror struck Collins as he filled the water canteen?

5. Was Collins really a hero, or was his action foolish? Is there any element of true heroism in his action? What is the difference between courage and foolhardiness?

6. Why is heroism a mystery? Discuss the appropriateness of the title in the light of the story. How does it imply the problem of appearance and reality as it is present in this story?

7. Why did the men goad Collins into going for the water? Do you think they really expected him to do it? What was their reaction when he went? How did they greet his return? Do you think they regarded him as a hero?

8. Read again the passage beginning on p. 91 where the dying artillery officer asks Collins for a drink of water. Why did he suppress the groans, and calmly ask for a drink? Was this courage? Why do you think the author put the episode into the story at this point?

9. In a moment of crisis, details that may be quite irrelevant to what is happening sometimes make a vivid impression upon us. The seeming unreality of the situation is heightened by an awareness of the actual reality of these things. Crane mentions the white legs of the gunners, for example. What other details can you find used by the author to create the feeling of emergency? How are the impressions often made more

vivid by the use of simile and metaphor? Find and comment upon a few that you feel to be most effective.

10. Find examples in the story that illustrate how Crane has sometimes used contrast to heighten the effect of the impression he wishes to create.

11. Do you find any irony in the way the story ends? Might the title itself be ironic? Are there other touches of irony in the story? Does the ironic tone give you a clue to the author's Point of View?

12. Might the bucket of water be interpreted as a symbol? Could the author be using the incident to point up something about life that he feels is significant? Did Crane have a purpose beyond presenting an entertaining story?

13. As you read the story, did you notice anything significant about Crane's style? Remember, this story was written about seventy years ago. Look at a sample page, and observe the length and construction of the sentences. P. 89 is a typical example. Read the paragraph beginning "However, he had no full appreciation of anything, excepting that he was actually conscious of being dazed." Compare it with this passage taken from The Old Man and the Sea. Remember Hemingway wrote this more than fifty years later.

> Why was I not born with two good hands? he thought. Perhaps it was my fault in not training that one properly. But God knows he has had enough chances to learn. He did not do so badly in the night, though, and he has only cramped once. If he cramps again let the line cut him off. When he thought that he knew he was not being clear-headed and he thought he should chew some more of the dolphin.

What is the dominant characteristic of both styles? What other aspect of Crane's writing makes him "modern"?

EXERCISES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR COMPOSITION

1. Using your dictionary, find the meaning and derivation for each word underlined in the text of the story: conflagration, demeanor, imprecation, calamity, carnage, gesticulating, retraction, indolent, blanched.
What did you notice about the derivation of every word except the last? What does this tell you about our language? Can you replace these words with simpler, more often used words? Can you explain this? Find other words that are derived from the same Latin root as carnage. Explain how the modern English meaning was derived from the Latin.

2. Much of the vividness of Crane's writing comes from his use of simile and metaphor to convey an exact image to the mind of the reader. Look again at some of the examples you discussed in class. Try to create similar metaphors and similes to bring to life descriptions of some of the following:
a) a swimmer, diving into the water and swimming;
b) a mother duck leading her ducklings to the river;
c) a sky-diver making a parachute jump;
d) a train viewed from the air;
e) a sudden shower of rain;
f) a child wading through a puddle;
g) anything else you would like to describe.

3. Write an account of an experience that was frightening for you. Try to describe exactly how you felt both at the time, and afterwards.

4. Is heroism simply the absence of fear in a dangerous situation? Is it possible for a hero to experience fear? Write a definition of heroism as you understand it, and give examples that illustrate yourview.

5. With the help of your teacher or librarian, find another story by Stephen Crane. Read it and then write a report, after you have studied the story in the same way you looked at "A Mystery of Heroism." Be sure to discuss what the story is about both on the surface level (the plot), and on a deeper level. Sometimes this general idea is called the theme. Have the details of the story been selected by the author to point up the theme? How important is the setting? How is it developed? Is it given at the beginning, or scattered throughout the story? Is it needed for the theme? Does it help to explain the characters? Does it create a mood or atmosphere? Is it essential to the plot? Are the characters true to life? What impression does the story leave you with?

Some of the titles you might enjoy reading are: "The Open Boat," "The Blue Hotel," "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky," "The Grey Sleeve," The Red Badge of Courage (which is sometimes considered a short novel).

With your teacher's permission, you may prepare this as an oral report to be given to the class.

6. Go to the library and find a historical account of a Civil War battle. Compare this account with Crane's description of the battle in "A Mystery of Heroism." Do the historian and the writer have the same purpose in writing? Does this explain their different Point of View? Write a few paragraphs discussing this question, using illustrations from the two accounts that point up the differences.